

The departure of the young king in May 1520 to assume the imperial crown, to which he had been elected the year before, threw all Castile into a ferment. Before leaving to be crowned emperor at Aix-la-Chapelle he had succeeded in extorting a subsidy from the Castilian Cortes at Corunna. Even before his departure, Toledo had given expression to its detestation of the new *regime* by a rising, and now Segovia, Zamora, Madrid, Guadalajara, Burgos, Valladolid, Alcala, Soria, Toro, Avila, Cuenca, sprang to arms to execute vengeance on their oppressors, and to hang, in some cases, the persons or the effigies of their too pliant deputies. Malcontent nobles, like Pedro de Giron and the Navarese Count of Salvatierra, took the popular side, and many of the clergy, headed by the Bishop of Zamora, the bellicose and republican Antonio de Acuna, were its strenuous supporters. The repressive measures of Charles' viceroy, his old Flemish tutor, Cardinal Hadrian, whose general, Antonio de Fonseca, burned Medina del Campo, only lent cohesion to the movement. The revolted Communeros sent representatives to an assembly or Junta Santa at Avila (July 1520), subsequently transferred to Tordesillas, which was captured by the revolutionists (29th August), and, under the bold leadership of men like Juan de Padilla and Pedro Laso, deposed the viceroy and the royal council, assumed the supreme power, and formulated a bulky petition for sweeping reforms. These petitions reveal the reaction against the autocratic system which Charles represented, as well as the hatred of the rapacity of his foreign favourites. Among other items the petitioners demanded the regular convocation of the Cortes every three years, security of person and freedom of election and speech for the deputies, the deposition of the regent and the dismissal of foreigners from all offices in Church and State, the liberation of the municipalities from the encroachments of the crown, the taxation of the nobility, their exclusion from various offices, and the restoration of the common lands appropriated by them.

The last demand was singularly impolitic, for it alienated the nobles from the commons, and finally wrecked the movement. It availed not that the Junta strove to secure the alliance of Queen Juana, Charles' mother, whom Ferdinand had craftily imprisoned at Tordesillas as a lunatic, and whom